

SERMON SUMMARY FOR COMMUNITY GROUP LEADERS, 05/18/14

Ruth 3-4: "The Redemption of Ruth," Trent Hunter

In a sentence: The story about a family, suffering, and love is actually about Christ.

SUNDAY'S OUTLINE

1. Ruth Pursues Boaz ch. 3)
2. Boaz Pursues Ruth (4:1-17a)
3. God Pursues Us (4:17b-22)

HELP FOR UNDERSTANDING AND APPLYING THE SERMON TEXT

1. Both Ruth and Naomi were in a "position of tremendous need." Naomi, for instance, found herself in times when there was no king in Israel, and she was without a husband. In fact Naomi called herself "bitterness." Yet she was able to minister to Ruth at a time when most of us would say, "I need to receive, I can't give to others." Have you experienced this? Either being able to give when going through great distress yourself, or watching someone else do that?
2. Ruth 3:2-4 mentioned a strategic plan. In other words Naomi did not sit idly by and wait for things to happen. Yet God is the main character in the book of Ruth. How do these two things work together? That is, we work, but God divinely ordains, plans, and executes His plans. How does the tension of these two affect prayer?
3. It was mentioned that what Ruth did (uncovering the feet of Boaz) is not "prescriptive" but "descriptive." The word "prescriptive" means that it is a command (or example to follow) that is more universal. Think of a doctor

giving a “prescription,” which means, “do this (take this)!” The word “descriptive,” when used of a story in the Bible, means that an event is described, but that there’s no indication from the text that we should do the same thing. Can you think of other examples of either a “prescriptive” story or command, or a “descriptive” (not necessarily to be followed today) story or command?

4. It was mentioned that “this could have gone wrong (the plan Naomi gave to Ruth) in so many ways.” This applies to the evening in which Ruth uncovered the feet of Boaz. And it could also apply to the unnamed guy at the end (“so-and-so”), who could have married Ruth and bought the land instead of Boaz. What does the book of Ruth teach about God? Perhaps think of both His working through circumstance, and second His larger plan.

An example of the need to look at God’s larger plan would be an illustration a friend gave me years ago. He said when his father taught him woodworking, his father taught him to, when looking at a long piece of wood (say a 2x4x8) to set one end on the ground, then look down the length of the whole piece. When doing that, you get a completely differently view. When looked at from the side, the piece can look straight. But only when looking down the length can one tell that it is warped or bent. Thus it is with circumstances. If we look at only today, or this moment, there could be reason for great discouragement.

So in what ways can we view and meditate on God’s larger plan?